

Testimony on Raised Bill No. 5450

Good morning, my name is Sandi Carbonari. I am a primary care pediatrician and the immediate past president of the CT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and I am here representing the nearly 1000 members of the CTAAP. We are supporting HB 5450, "An Act Concerning the Use of Palliative Marijuana".

We support passage of this bill as written. The American Academy of Pediatrics opposes the use of "medical marijuana" outside the regulatory process of the US Food and Drug Administration because there are currently no published studies on the efficacy of marijuana as a medication in children. Additionally, there are grave concerns about the effect of marijuana on the developing brain. However, we in Connecticut recognize the potential for use in cases of children with terminal illness or debilitating conditions such as intractable seizure disorders that do not respond to traditional treatment modalities. In these situations the benefit of potential relief of pain and suffering outweighs concerns about future brain development.

Marijuana is classified as a schedule I drug by the US Drug Enforcement Agency, signifying the drug has a high potential for abuse, no accepted medical use, and there is a lack of accepted safety for use of the drug or substance under medical supervision. Cannabinoids, which are components of marijuana, have been proven to be effective in treating specific conditions in adults including nausea, vomiting, and chronic pain conditions. Currently, the US Food and Drug Administration has approved 3 pharmaceutical cannabinoids. However, there have been no published studies about the effects of cannabinoids on the pediatric population and the developing brain.

The AAP strongly supports research and development of pharmaceutical cannabinoids and supports a review of policies promoting research on the medical use of these compounds. The AAP recommends changing marijuana from a Drug Enforcement Agency schedule I to a schedule II drug to facilitate this research.

We strongly support the requirement that a board certified pediatrician be on the Board of Physicians that reviews the addition of new conditions qualifying for use of palliative marijuana. In fact, we currently have 3 members who are interested and highly qualified to serve. Additionally, we believe the section which will allow for bifurcated decision making is a good policy. This will allow for making decisions for future adult conditions separate from decisions for children's conditions, and within that, brain development must be considered.

The policy statement and full technical report "The Impact of Marijuana Policies on Youth: Clinical, Research and Legal Update" can be found at:

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2015/01/20/peds.2014-4147.full.pdf>
(technical report)

and <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/3/584> (policy statement)